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SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SYSTEM-WIDE INFORMATION PROGRAMME FOR THE 1992 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. In resolution 47/73 B of 14 December 1992, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General "to report to the Committee on Information at its fifteenth session in 1993 on the results of the implementation of a system-wide information programme for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development" (UNCED), which was held in June 1992. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. A system-wide information programme for UNCED was proposed by the Department of Public Information (DPI) to the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) at its seventeenth session, held in June 1991. By this proposal, the "core" information programme was to be supplemented with additional inter-agency projects in support of UNCED. Details of all of these projects were set out in the report of the Secretary-General to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session (A/AC.198/1992/3). The information contained herein, covering the period from February through June 1992, is intended as an update to that report.

CORE INFORMATION PROGRAMME

3. The following are additional details on elements of the core programme:

(a) Poster

The Conference poster was printed in the six official languages and in Portuguese. It was distributed prior to the Conference and it is still being provided upon request.

(b) Press kit

The press kit for the Summit, distributed to journalists at the Conference, included: summaries of the revised draft Agenda 21, Forest Principles, Rio Declaration and Conventions on climate change and biodiversity; Issues in Brief - fact sheets on major issues before the Conference; "Quotable Quotes" (intended to facilitate journalists' stories); a background press release; information notes on Conference logistics; and glossy sheets of the Conference logo. Some 9,000 kits were distributed in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

(c) Journalists' encounter

A one-day seminar, featuring the UNCED Secretary-General and presenting the views of North and South on most of the major issues of the Conference, was held the day prior to the opening of the Summit. It was organized and moderated by DPI.

(d) United Nations in Action

This three-minute news programme is released weekly by satellite on CNN World Report and through United Nations information centres on video cassette. In 1992, the following segments dealing with environment and development were distributed: Panama Canal watershed threatened as a result of deforestation; coastal pollution in Trinidad and Tobago; industry vs. tourism; biodiversity: beans in Colombia; and environmentally sound tourism in Nepal.

(e) Public service announcements

DPI produced and distributed a series of public service announcements promoting environmental sustainability and the Earth Summit use on television. Spots in the six official languages and Portuguese were distributed through the United Nations Association of the United States of America and through United Nations information centres world wide for use on local stations.

(f) Radio documentaries

DPI produced eight 15-minute programmes in English prior to the Summit. The United Nations Development Programme provided logistical support for the radio producers as they travelled in the field to obtain material on United Nations projects dealing with regional sustainable development. The programmes were adapted into French and Spanish and widely distributed. They were produced by free-lance documentary-makers and reached a wider audience than is usually the case for United Nations radio programmes. They were distributed through the United Nations radio network and - a first for United Nations programmes - were also broadcast in North America through National Public Radio which aired the programmes twice: once prior to the Conference and again later in the summer.

ADDITIONAL INTER-AGENCY PROJECTS

4. The following are details of the inter-agency projects in support of UNCED which were carried out or are still under way;

(a) United Nations system exhibit at UNCED

DPI and 10 other JUNIC members - the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the then Department of Technical Cooperation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat - contributed to and organized the joint United Nations exhibition at RioCentro, the site of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, DPI provided a producer who also served as fund-raiser. As one of only two exhibits on site of the Conference, the joint exhibition provided the visual leit motif for the Summit: most of the world's major television networks filmed nightly news bulletins with the exhibit's revolving globe as a backdrop. The message of the exhibition was "People, environment and development", and it addressed in words and images the work being done by the agencies of the United Nations system on issues relating to sustainable development. The text accompanying the exhibit was made available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese in pamphlet form. The total cost of the exhibit amounted to US$ 166,190, which included funds for rental lighting and projection equipment, silk-screening of panels, construction of the plexiglass globe, site construction and mounting of the exhibit. The essential elements of the exhibit were used after the Conference in an exhibit mounted at Headquarters from mid-August through mid-November 1992.

(b) "Earth Summit in Focus"

Nine background articles on major issues were prepared by DPI. All were available in English, French and Spanish. Some were also available in Portuguese. The articles were: "The '92 process: The United Nations prepared for Rio"; "Trekking to the Summit"; "Transferring environmentally sound technology"; "Sustaining life in the oceans"; "Saving the forests: forging a global compact"; "Population: balancing the global equation"; "Protecting the diversity of species on the planet"; "The business of sustainable development"; and "Global climate change: the need for clean energy".

(c) Handbook on Sustainable Development

This is a work in progress, which DPI feels can be a valuable vehicle to present the integrated work of the United Nations on sustainable development, especially to journalists. Information has now been received from most agencies in the United Nations system.

(d) Development Forum

A special edition (Vol. 20, No. 3, May-June 1992) contained extended coverage of the Conference.

(e) Joint United Nations information kit

DPI was coordinating this project on behalf of JUNIC when it was learned that the size of the United Nations Press Centre was smaller than originally

planned and that there would be no space for the information materials which United Nations agencies and programmes had expected to distribute at the Conference. DPI asked that each JUNIC member prepare a two-page submission on their sustainable development activities. The Department then designed a prototype masthead, made it available to JUNIC members, collated the materials in Rio and distributed them in the Press Centre and throughout the Conference complex. The joint information kit was distributed to some 1,200 journalists, delegates and representatives of non-governmental organizations at the Conference site.

COVERAGE OF UNCED

5. DPI organized and operated the Press Centre at RioCentro, providing services to the international media. Some 8,700 journalists were accredited to the Conference. These services included: accreditation, documents distribution, audiovisual coverage and facilities, photographic services, press briefings, press releases, coordination of press access to meetings, and interviews with substantive officers. The press briefing room at the Press Centre, run by DPI, was fully booked on all days of the Conference for 30-minute briefings, generally from 10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. Most United Nations agencies held briefings by their agency heads. Office space was provided for press officers from JUNIC members and the UNCED Media Office. JUNIC members also had free access to DPI's video, photo and reproduction facilities, as well as to the briefing room.